



# INDIANA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

To: Indiana State Board of Education

RE: *In the Matter of Crawfordsville Community School Corporation, Appeal # 2-12016*

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The issue in this appeal is whether a straightforward application of the State Board of Education's ("Board") rule on accountability categories fairly reflects the performance of the only three elementary school buildings in the Crawfordsville Community School Corporation ("Crawfordsville"): a K–1 feeder school, a 2–3 receiving school, and a 4–5 grade school. As applied to the facts in this matter, the Board's accountability rule as applied does not fairly reflect the performance of Crawfordsville's only three grade schools, and consequently an alternative approach IS recommended, which is outlined at the end of this letter.

Under the Board's rule, Crawfordsville's K–1 school building is required to receive whatever grade is given to the 2–3 school building. The 2–3 school building, in turn, administers the ISTEP+ to one grade only—grade 3. Grade 3, being the initial grade of grades 3–8 to be given the ISTEP+, cannot receive points for growth. Growth points are, in contrast, awarded to grades 4–5. In this instance, by calculating ISTEP+ results for grade 3 separately from grades 4–5, grade 3's performance is skewed negatively while grades 4–5 results are skewed positively. The following facts bear this conclusion.

Crawfordsville has three elementary school buildings: a K–1 (Laura Hose); a 2–3 (Meredith Nicholson); and a 4–5 (Mollie B. Hoover). The K–1 elementary school is treated as a feeder school for the 2–3 elementary school. The 2–3 elementary school is treated as a receiving school for the K–1 elementary school. A receiving school's accountability grade is assigned to the school that feeds into it. Accordingly, because Crawfordsville's 2–3 elementary school received an F, an F was also assigned to the K–1 elementary school building.

Given that the grade configuration of these three school buildings adversely affected the accountability categories that were received by the K–1 building and the 2–3 building, it is natural to wonder why the grades were configured this way. The grades were configured this way several years before the Board adopted its accountability rule. The reason for the configuration, according to Crawfordsville, was to more equitably distribute Title I money among the school buildings to benefit a growing ELL population.

Before the reconfiguration, Crawfordsville had three elementary school buildings, each configured as a K–5 school. These three identically configured school buildings did not, however, receive identical levels of Title I funding—even though all were experiencing similar increases in the number of ELL students. The inequitable distribution of Title I resources resulted in one school holding classes in trailers, while the other two schools benefitted from more substantial building resources.

In 2006, before the SBOE adopted the current A–F rule in 2009, Crawfordsville addressed this funding inequality by reconfiguring the three K–5 school buildings as a single K–1 school building, a single 2–3 school building, and a single 4–5 school building. This reconfiguration allowed a more equitable distribution of Title I funds to all ELL students. But, as the facts show, it also created unintended consequences with respect to calculating the schools' accountability categories.

The Board's A–F rule should not adversely affect a reconfigured elementary school building when (1) the building was among several elementary school buildings reconfigured to more equitably apportion Title I funds to ELL students; (2) the reconfiguration happened prior to the Board's adoption of the A–F rule in 2009; and (3) the reconfigured buildings include the only grade 2–3 receiving school for the only K–1 feeder school within the school district.

Under these facts, it would more fairly reflect school performance if the three grade school buildings were allowed to calculate their A–F grades as if grades 3–5 were one receiving school building, and grades K–2 were one feeder school building. Calculating a school performance grade this way would result in a B for grades 3–5, which I propose should be the grade given to the 4–5 elementary school, the 2–3 receiving school, and the K–1 feeder school.

There is, however, one exception to this calculation, and it occurs for the 2014–15 school year only.

Because the 2014–15 school year is being treated as a “hold harmless” year by the Indiana General Assembly under current state law, every school has the right to receive the higher of its 2013–14 or 2014–15 grade. Consequently, Crawfordsville's 4–5 elementary school, Mollie B. Hoover, which received a grade of A in one of the past two school years, has a right to receive a grade of A for 2014–15.

After the 2014–15 school year, however, Crawfordsville agrees that the method outlined here should be the method used to determine accountability for its three elementary school buildings. Accordingly, all three elementary school buildings would share the same grade based on the calculation of a single accountability category for grades 3–5. In the case of any changes to relevant law or material facts, the Board would reserve the right to change the method of calculating an accountability category for Crawfordsville's three elementary schools, and Crawfordsville likewise would reserve the right to petition the Board for a change in such method. This letter applies to Crawfordsville only, and does not create precedent for any other school.

Respectfully submitted,

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John D. Snethen  
Executive Director  
Indiana State Board of Education

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Date

**I HAVE READ THE ABOVE LETTER AND UNDERSTAND AND AGREE WITH ITS FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS, AND AGREE TO BE BOUND BY THEM ON BEHALF OF CRAWFORDSVILLE COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION.**

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J. Scott Bowling  
Superintendent  
Crawfordsville Community School Corporation

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Date